

**Project/Program Profile**

**Name of Project/Program:** Edward L. Swillis Neighborhood Youth Center

**Organization:** Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission (Fresno EOC)

**Location of Project/Program:** 1805 E. California Avenue, Fresno, CA

**Year Project Completed/Program Began Operation:** July 2010

**Funding Sources:** 8 sources, 14 grants/fund sources, \$15.5 million awarded

Source of Funding	Designation	Fund Amount	Status (Expiration)
Murray-Hayden 2000 Bond Act (Prop 12)	Administration	\$1,581,838.72	Funded, effective March 1, 2003 (03/31/10)
State Park Bond Funds-Proposition 40 – CCC	Any purpose	\$1,288,015.04	Funded, effective July 1, 2005 (06/30/07)
State Park Bond (Prop 40) – Urban Parks Act	Any purpose	\$2,507,243.11	Funded, effective December 2004 (03/31/10)
State Park Bond Funds – Proposition 12 – CCC	Any purpose	\$659,049	Funded 2002 – Re-appropriated
Federal Office of Community Services	Any purpose	\$692,101.33	Funded, effective September 2005 (09/29/10)
HUD – Economic Development Initiative	Classrooms	\$148,500	Funded (09/30/13)
LCC Enterprise Operations		\$1,000,000 est.	
Fresno County EOC		\$3,727,967.63	Advance on cost of recreation building
Proposition 84 (Allocation 2)	Vocational Education & charter building	\$1,525,179	Pending approval of application for funds
DOC AB 3056	Vocational bldg (recycling uses)	\$1,867,000	Phase 1 Construction complete
YB DOL (1)	Labor only	\$149,666.36	
YB DOL (2)	Labor only	\$213,958.57	
YB AMC (1)	Labor only	\$70,307.57	
YB AMC (2)	Labor only	\$49,202.07	
TOTAL		\$15,480,029	

**Populations Served:** Fresno County youth

**Number of People Served:** 350-400/year

**Number of Staff:** 34

**Total Cost of Development/Operation:** \$15,480,029

**Partners:** California/Nevada Community Action Partnership

**Services Provided:**

- Charter School – YouthBuild Charter School of California
- Academic satellite centers for Fresno City College
- Professionally supervised mental health services by masters level student interns enrolled at Fresno State University
- Computer Lab - computer instruction and online academic coursework
- Career Center - Research and Counseling
- Vocational Training - a fully equipped workshop for metal fabrication, wood working, network cabling, and welding
- Crew-Based Jobs - Construction, building and grounds maintenance trades, recycling services, solar installation
- Community Service - Emphasis on investment in the community (guest speakers, field trips)
- Life Skills Workshops – Parenting, anger management, substance abuse treatment and prevention, financial management, career development, etc.
- Physical fitness programs
- Peer Counseling
- Mentoring – YouthBuild National Mentoring Alliance
- Job Development and Placement
- Health Screening Services (Fresno EOC's Health Services Division)
- Recreational Activities - indoor/outdoor sports, leagues for basketball, volleyball, soccer, baseball, golf, etc.

## **REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT: Community Facilities**

(Italicized portions offer further explanation. If the standard is not fulfilled by the project, it is noted in the italicized explanation. Crossed-out portions are not applicable.)

### Level 1: Project Feasibility Assessment

These basic criteria determine the feasibility of a real estate development project. The focus is on the organizational and financial readiness of the project.

#### 1. NEED

##### a. Community Need

- i. *The project serves a need for a youth center. The project supports local youth, provides training for youth, and creates an alternative space to be productive for youth. The project will also serve as an economic anchor to a severely blighted area.*

##### b. Market Study

- i. The market study confirms the need for, and viability/competitive advantage of the project.
  1. *Fresno EOC worked with the City of Fresno Redevelopment Agency to conduct the market study.*
- ii. The market study informs the organization about competition, demographics of the area, and barriers to entry.

##### c. Local Support & Initial Site Assessment

- i. The project fits the zoning of the site.
  1. *There were some zoning issues because of the vocational facilities, namely the recycling center. Because of the potential noise and smell, the design incorporated better fulfillment of the environmental requirements.*
- ii. The project is compatible with local land use.
- iii. The project is not located in an area with a moratorium or interim control ordinance that cannot be bypassed.
- iv. Neighbors and local community members support the project.
  1. *Through community surveys, Fresno EOC learned of the demand for services for youth.*
- v. The project is in alignment with local city, county, state and/or federal development goal(s).
  1. *Public entities requested that Fresno EOC develop a comprehensive neighborhood service center/headquarters.*

#### 2. ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

##### a. The organization is willing and able to do this project.

##### b. The project is in alignment with the mission of the organization.

- i. *The organization's mission is "to humanely focus all available resources to empower low-income families and individuals working toward the skills, knowledge and motivation for self-sufficiency." The project achieves this by creating a location to provide these resources.*

##### c. The Board of Directors embraces a CED strategy and/or embraces the project as a part of the CED strategy.

- i. *Fresno EOC in the last 10 years has become deliberately entrepreneurial because they realize they can help the community better if they can equip people/families with the skills they need to become self-sufficient.*

- d. The organization and/or its partners have a track record of completing similar projects.
  - i. *The organization successfully developed a Sanctuary with homeless services for minors aged 11 to 17 in 1992. The kitchen at the Sanctuary also does fee-based catering, for as many as 200 people.*
- e. The organization has the financial and operational capacity to undertake the proposed development.
  - i. *Through the 8 funding sources, Fresno EOC has financial capacity to support the project. Fresno EOC has adequate staff capacity with 34 staff members at the Neighborhood Youth Center.*
  - ii. ~~The organization can support the additional debt (if any) created by the project.~~
    - 1. *Although there was no debt, Fresno EOC was able to temporarily provide money while grants were being pursued.*
  - iii. The organization has qualified staff that can undertake the project.
    - 1. *A staff member has a general contractor's license.*
  - iv. The organization has access to reliable, qualified vendors and service providers.
    - 1. *Fresno EOC has many resources from its 47 years of operation.*

### 3. FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

#### a. Project cost

- i. The project is affordable to the developer, and the cost is appropriate to the concept or design.
  - 1. *Cost increased significantly throughout the course due to environmental factors.*
  - 2. *The organization received at no cost 7 acres of land in a depressed area from the City for the project, which reduced costs.*
- ii. If the total development cost is not readily available, the project is phased.
  - 1. *The project has been phased to 3 phases. 1) 2 buildings that roughly were 40,000 square feet of improved space at \$12 million; 2) education structures; 3) 10,000 square foot vocational building now complete at \$2 million.*
- iii. The contractor or operator providing the cost estimates is qualified and experienced in community facilities.
  - 1. *The Conservation Corps did much of the work, including landscaping, all exterior concrete work, some framing, shadowed surveyors, all fencing, including 6-foot masonry perimeter fencing around 7-acre parcel, etc.*

#### b. Funding sources

- i. There are enough sources of funding for the uses.
  - 1. *Fresno EOC was able to fund the whole project with grants, without any loans.*
- ii. The developer has endeavored to secure all available competitive and noncompetitive funding sources for which the project qualifies.
  - 1. *The project successfully utilizes funding from a larger variety of sources. Fresno EOC applied for roughly \$25 million in funds, and received approximately 64% of the requested funds.*
- iii. The actual disbursement of each source is timely and in sync with the needs of the project.
  - 1. *Disbursement was not always timely. The project was funded by grants, and since grants are paid as reimbursements, they have a higher risk of not being timely. The greatest source of delay was probably retention.*

- iv. The developer is aware of the compliance implications of each source.
  - 1. *The funds used are audited.*
- c. Cash flow
  - i. The project produces enough cash flow to support the proposed debt structure (if any).
    - 1. *The building does not carry any debt, so all costs are operational. The project does support operational cost. Operational costs include labor, materials, and equipment associated with enterprise and training functions including grounds maintenance, construction, recycling, and solar installations which are managed by the Conservation Corps (which is housed in the project).*
  - ii. The project minimally pays for itself over time. It has sustainable cash flow.
    - 1. *There is no debt to pay back over time.*
    - 2. *The project has sustainable cash flow.*
  - iii. The organization has secured tenants.
    - 1. *The project is completely full and fully operational. The local Conservation Corps is the primary tenant.*

## Level 2: Practical Considerations

These criteria are essential for further developing a successful, operating project.

### 1. MARKET BARRIERS

- a. The organization understands why past proposals have not worked and instead addresses prior issues in innovative alternative ways.
  - i. *This size of the project was new to Fresno EOC, and the project has worked out without many issues. The approach to funding was innovative in that it allowed the organization to grow significantly. The organization leveraged fees for services alongside grants so that no single source of funds was obligated for project development.*

### 2. DEVELOPMENT TEAM & PARTNERSHIPS

- a. The organization has assembled the best team for the project, including architects, project managers, property managers, contractors, real estate brokers, leasing agents, and other third party consultants.
  - i. *Fresno EOC's size and good reputation have allowed it to attract and pay for large projects, which allows them to attract high quality partners.*
- b. If the organization is lacking in any area (financial, experience), it has partnered with another entity to develop the project.
  - i. *Fresno EOC met with Cal/Neva regularly, and the project serves as a template for future projects for Cal/Neva members.*
- c. The project is supported by public sector, private sector, and community partners.
  - i. *The project's capital needs are supported by federal, state and local monies.*
- d. Through an open dialogue with the community, the organization has sought and incorporated community input and approval.
  - i. *Fresno EOC put a survey together of 40-50 questions before the project started and canvassed business owners and residents in the 1 mile area around the proposed site. Fresno EOC also put together an advisory committee with community stakeholders.*

### 3. SITE CHARACTERISTICS AND PROJECT DESIGN

- a. The location makes sense for the project. – Down economy in Fresno

- i. Due to the struggling local economy, the project made sense as a revitalizing investment for Fresno.*
    - b. The design makes sense for the targeted use (e.g. provides correct amount of parking).
    - c. The project is located near or adjacent to existing or future transit.
      - i. There is a bus stop located right outside the project.*
    - d. If the site is a known brownfield or historic structure, the project accounts for increased time, costs, and other issues associated with these environmental and/or historic considerations.
      - i. An underground water supply channel had to be relocated, increasing costs greatly.*
    - e. The proposed project is the highest and best use of the site.
    - f. The design is compatible with the characteristics of the community and surrounding buildings.
    - g. The project does not “look” like it offers rents lower than market.
      - i. The design is driven by the belief that the project should be first rate and make a statement because of the general negative perception of the area. The buildings are contemporary and aesthetically pleasing.*
    - h. If located in a redevelopment area or contains blighted or dilapidated structures, the project accounts for increased costs and also takes advantage of resources for redevelopment projects.
      - i. The land was acquired at no cost from the redevelopment agency because it was in a blighted, depressed area. It was appraised at \$653,000.*
    - i. If the project does not comply with the underlying zoning and land use intensity, the timeline and budget for entitlement have been extended.
      - i. There were some zoning issues because of the vocational facilities, namely the recycling center. Because of the potential noise and smell, the design incorporated better fulfillment of the environmental requirements. This was built into the cost of the project.*
4. CONSTRUCTION
- a. Project met major construction milestones and was completed on schedule.
    - i. The project met all of the grant construction deadlines. The project could have been built more quickly if loans were used to finance the project, but the organization preferred grants over debt given their availability at the time.*
  - b. Construction timeline was in sync with financing requirements.
    - i. Syncing construction with fund disbursement was tricky, especially because the State of California was facing financial problems. A freeze was put on bonds that supported some grants, but Fresno EOC kept the project moving.*
  - ~~c. Construction loan was converted to permanent loan on time.~~
1. *There were no loans for this project.*
5. RENT UP, MANAGEMENT & OPERATION
- a. Upon construction, the lease up of the project was completed in a timely manner.
  - b. The project is fully occupied.
  - c. Tenants are provided with opportunities to participate in the management and/or operation of the project.

Level 3: From Feasible to Exemplary

These criteria elevate a functioning project to an exemplary project.

1. FUNDING & FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

- a. The project uses a program or funding source that is new and innovative. – No loans

- i. The project did not use any loans, which is unusual.*
  - b. Each funding source was heavily leveraged to gain further resources.
    - i. As construction proceeded, grant equity was leveraged to obtain additional grants.*
  - c. Certain features of the project were adapted to capture funding, but the project was not completely changed in order to capture one particular funding source.
  - d. There are multiple stakeholders providing funding, and this mix of funding sources maximizes the feasibility of the project.
    - i. 14 different grants from 8 different sources fund this project.*
  - e. The design of the project exceeds minimum standards required by funding sources.
    - i. The quality of the construction used on the project exceeds minimum standards required by funding sources.*
        - 1. One of the structures has been reinforced to meet "emergency operations center" criteria.*
      - ii. The amenities provided by the project exceed minimum standards required by funding sources.*
        - 1. One building contains an NBA-sized gymnasium. The other contains a state-of-the-art computer lab.*
      - iii. The sizes of the units exceed minimum standards required by funding sources.*
      - iv. The project creates more jobs than required by the funding sources.*
        - 1. One funder awarded grant funds that required jobs creation. The project far exceeded the required number of jobs to be created.*
    - f. The design of the project and units are culturally appropriate.
    - g. The project is located in close proximity to jobs and public transit.
      - i. There is a bus stop located right outside the project.*
- 2. FUTURE PROJECTS
  - a. The project strengthens the position (financial, political, capacity, experience) of the organization.
    - i. The project has leveraged considerable financial, programmatic, and political capital. It demonstrates the capacity, energy, vision, and competence of the agency and its merit for future projects.*
  - b. Through the development process, the reputation of the organization was enhanced. Issues that the project team faced were dealt with in a diplomatic manner, enabling future projects.
    - i. The agency was unequivocal in its professionalism, diplomacy, and competency in addressing any challenges during the development process.*
  - c. The success of the project will enable future funding on other projects.
    - i. The experience the agency acquired in completing this project assures the likely success of future projects of similar or greater scope.*
  - d. The community is happy with the project and will support more/similar development in the future.
    - i. The community is absolutely happy with the project. The agency's project demonstrated leadership of unparalleled stature for development in the area. The site on which the project was built was vacant and blighted for 40 years.*
  - e. The community is more knowledgeable about community facilities.
    - i. The project is the first of its kind in 40 years in this area.*
- 3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
  - a. The project has less environmental impact than traditional projects during construction and during operation.

- i. The project features light sensors. Additionally, solar arrays are being installed on the buildings. The project is very eco-conscious, especially with the involvement of the Conservation Corps, and is constantly evolving.*
  - b. The project meets green building standards such as adaptive reuse or LEED certification*
    - i. The project does not meet green building standards because LEED certification was simply too expensive as costs escalated during the construction boom of the early to mid 2000's. However, new green features such as solar arrays are being installed now, and Fresno EOC hopes that the project will be LEED certified eventually.*
  - c. The project conserves energy and water.*
    - i. Most systems are on timers. This automated service prevents unnecessary use.*
  - d. The project has an effective recycling program.*
    - i. A full-scale commercial recycling program in a 10,000 SF vocational training facility is part of the project's training programs.*
  - e. The project fulfills the triple bottom line.*
    - i. The project has repeatedly demonstrated its effectiveness and resulted in evidence-based studies that assert its value as a thriving enterprise as well as youth development and employment generating operation for a very challenged population.*
  - f. The project has an educational component that teaches tenants about using green features effectively.*
    - i. The project is based on education & vocational training. The green training is sponsored by the Conservation Corps and is focused on recycling, grounds maintenance and construction. An on-site charter school fully integrates academic learning with the skills being taught on the worksite.*
  - g. The project stimulates green job creation.*
    - i. The project is adding a solar lab and trainees are exposed to solar installation projects. Considerable electronically monitored irrigation and zeroscape projects promote smart use of water.*
- 4. ECONOMIC IMPACT**
  - a. The project will increase the independence of tenants.*
    - i. The project aims to increase the independence and growth of its tenant, the Local Conservation Corps.*
- 5. FOOD SECURITY**
  - a. The project contains a community garden, farmers' market, education, and/or urban gardening component.*
    - i. The project features an educational program about food security. Fresno EOC has among its programs a farmers market and emergency food distribution, and plans are underway to develop a community garden near the project.*
- 6. COMPREHENSIVENESS**
  - a. There are multiple services provided by the project e.g. social services or education centers.*
    - i. Truly comprehensive, by design and unique among its peers, the project offers a variety of social, economic, health, academic, vocational, and entrepreneurial programs. These include secondary and post secondary degree-bearing programs; paid employment training in the construction trades, recycling, grounds maintenance, and solar installation; leadership development and civic engagement opportunities; assistance with business startups, including capital; health screening and instruction; and counseling and case management addressing emergency, transitional and permanent housing, transportation, nutrition, emergency energy*



*assistance, substance abuse, clothing, hygiene, pregnancy prevention, parenting, deportment, respect for authority, job readiness, career development, job placement, and follow up, to name just a few.*

- b. There are complementary uses of the spaces created by the project.
  - i. *The space was designed to be multi-purpose, with lots of open space for assembly. It was designed for services and to be user-friendly.*

#### 7. DIVERSITY

- a. The project serves a mixed income clientele.
  - i. *90% of users are low-very low income, but the doors are open to anyone.*
- b. The project encourages mixed age, gender, ethnic, etc. participation.
  - i. *The core group of users is 18-26 (Conservation Corps) but the space and its programs are open to anyone regardless of gender, age, or ethnicity.*

#### 8. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

- a. Property management communicates in languages with which tenants are familiar.
- b. Property management maintains a good relationship with tenants.
  - i. *Tenant provides all property management services and utilizes clients in the process to provide training.*
- c. Property management consistently collects rents in a timely manner.
  - i. *The percentage of space used by the various programs operated by the Conservation Corps is charged to operational contracts.*
- d. Tenants remain happy with the project after 1 year, 5 years, etc. of operations.
  - i. *After two years of operation, tenants remain extremely happy.*

#### 9. PUBLIC BENEFITS

- a. The project serves the community's need for community facilities.
  - i. *The project has provided abundant alternatives to similar facilities that are aged and in disrepair. It offers new spaces for education and community interaction that, until now, were deficient.*
- b. The project creates spaces available for public uses (commercial, open, green).
  - i. *The project is open for public use.*
- c. The project removes blight in the neighborhood.
  - i. *The project became an anchor for revitalization in an area identified by researchers, including the Brookings Institute, as having pockets of concentrated poverty without peer in the entire country. Since the project was completed several new housing and commercial facilities have been constructed and eliminated much of the blight.*
- d. The project improves neighborhood security.
  - i. *During construction of the project, the cost of security went up because every night the new windows were shot out and had to be replaced the next day. There is now security there every day, and the area is safer than it has been for decades.*
- e. The project stimulates long-term job creation.
  - i. *The project provides transitional jobs for most employees, which gives them a skill set to take with them. However, it has also created many new well paying, professional permanent jobs.*
- f. The project stimulates small business creation.
  - i. *The Conservation Corps provides entrepreneurial services. Businesses have opened because of the skills learned at the Neighborhood Youth Center.*
- g. The project supports minority businesses.
  - i. *Fresno EOC is a minority business/organization and the businesses that have been created as a result of the project are, in most cases, minority businesses.*

- h. The project results in local employment.
    - i. *The project has created many jobs. 80 construction and grounds maintenance jobs were created with a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Community Services grant. The Conservation Corps connected with youth that were low-performing in school and employed them upon the condition that they enroll in the charter school on the project site or Fresno City College (which uses some of the project's facilities).*
  - i. The project stimulates housing development in the area.
    - i. *Within a one mile radius of the project, 200 units of mixed-income apartment buildings of mixed income were built following the success of the project.*
  - j. The project serves as a reinvestment/investment catalyst by incentivizing development as a result of the project's success.
    - i. *The project has catalyzed housing development and some commercial development in the area.*
  - k. Public improvements that support the project such as bus routes and street improvements benefit the entire neighborhood.
    - i. *Offsite improvements were needed before building began, and Fresno EOC provided the improvements as part of the project.*
  - l. The project results in other positive physical impacts.
    - i. *The project enhances a neighborhood that had previously been depressed and blighted.*
  - m. The project results in other positive economic impacts.
    - i. *Owners of local stores such as gas stations, groceries, and laundromats have seen significant improvements in revenue.*
    - ii. *The project has spurred job creation.*
  - n. The project results in other positive social impacts.
    - i. *Crime is down in the area. The project instills a new, positive, and proud perspective among residents and visitors to the community.*
10. REPLICABLE/SCALABLE
- a. This project can be replicated in other communities, regions, and/or states.
    - i. *The project may be replicable, but not without hard work. With a project of this size and scope it comes down to the intangibles: leadership, vision, motivation and persistence. While New Market Tax Credits were not used on this project, they would be something that would make a project of this size replicable in other places assuming other significant amounts of capital were secured to leverage the credits.*